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ABSTRACT

This kit of training strategies and case studies is designed to help trainers to become more successful with their communication and training in the tourism and hospitality industry and to train employees with low language, literacy, and numeracy skills more effectively and efficiently. It is intended for trainers who do some on-the-job skills training but for whom training is not the main part of their job. The kit is divided into three sections. Section 1 has three parts that provide strategies and information for before starting training, while training, and when assessing. Section 2 presents six case studies designed to stimulate discussion and ideas on ways to make training and communication in the multicultural workplace more effective and more accessible. The questions for each case study are intended to assist trainers to plan and conduct workshops. Some responses and strategies for improving communication are suggested. Section 3 contains these appendixes: a list of nine organizations which can provide information on workplace skills training; a list of suggested courses for language, literacy, and numeracy; a list of nine bookshops for language, literacy, and numeracy books; and an annotated list of eight books, videos, and CD-ROMs. (YLB)

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GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS

Language, Literacy and Numeracy in Tourism and Hospitality Industry Training

A Guide for Workplace Trainers

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NEW SOUTH WALES AMES
QUALITY LANGUAGE & LITERACY SERVICES

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Sydney Opera House - Harbour Restaurant and Green Room
Regent Hotel, Sydney
Renaissance Hotel, Sydney
Southern Pacific Hotels, Sydney
Schweppes - Cottees, Sydney

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Benson's Hospitality and Training, Sydney
NSW Restaurant and Catering Association
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Introduction

Background

Good communication is necessary in the workplace. It is necessary if training is to be effective and if the workplace is to have satisfied staff. Effective communication can only happen if everyone is able to communicate as they need to.

The Tourism and Hospitality Industry is characterised by a workforce which has diverse needs and skills in terms of communication. This diversity needs to be taken into account in job skills training.

- Many employees in the industry come from other countries and cultural backgrounds. They may speak many different languages. They may have different customs and ways of doing things from those that are common in Australia.
- Some employees may have difficulties in speaking, listening, reading and writing English for different purposes.
- Employees who have difficulties with reading and writing and numeracy may come from a non-English speaking background or be born and educated in Australia. It is estimated that up to one in seven workers in Australia, more than half of them Australian born, cannot write or read well enough to do many of the basic tasks of their jobs.

All of these factors can lead to breakdowns in communication in the workplace.

What do communication skills have to do with training?

- Good communication skills are a part of good training skills. If your communication skills are good, your training will be more effective.
- Good training includes helping trainees to communicate well. If your trainees have communication difficulties you can help them improve their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills that are necessary for the job, at the same time as you are training them.
- Good training includes learning to recognise communication problems. These may be problems that arise in speaking, listening, reading or writing or because of cultural misunderstandings. Trainers can also learn how to deal with these difficulties.

What is the kit for?

Some employees in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry may have difficulty in getting the most out of their workplace training. They may find it difficult to cope with the speaking, listening, reading, writing or numeracy demands of training.

This kit of training strategies and case studies will help you to become a more successful communicator and trainer. It will help you to train employees with low language, literacy and numeracy skills more effectively and efficiently.

This kit can also be used by trainers, supervisors and managers as the basis for short training sessions to increase awareness of on-the-job communication problems and to suggest strategies to deal with them.

Who is the kit for?

This kit of strategies and case studies is for trainers who do some on-the-job skills training but for whom training is not the main part of their job.

Other trainers, supervisors and managers may also find the strategies and case studies useful.

What is in the kit?

This kit is divided into three sections.

Section 1 has three parts:

- Before you start training
- While you are training
- When you are assessing

Section 2 presents six case studies with questions and responses.

The Appendix gives you information on where to get further help.

You may not need to read every section, part or case study. Use the bits that are useful for you.

At the bottom of some pages there are suggestions about where you can get more information.

How do you use the kit?

1 **Look at the contents page to get an idea of what is in the kit.**

2 **Read the introduction to find out what this kit is for.**

3 **Look at the first page of each part which has a list of contents.**

Ask yourself questions about the contents eg:

Do I already know this?
Is there anything else I could learn in this part?

4 **Find the section or part that interests you.**

Before you start reading, think about what you already know about the subject.

Have I had this problem?
What did I do?
What are some different ways of working it out?
What new strategies do I want to remember?

5 **Talk to your work colleagues about any new strategies you find.**

Maybe they have been having the same problem as you.

6 **Leave the strategies in the folder.**

Your colleagues may want to read them too.

Section 1

Part 1: Before you start training

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Part 1: Before you start training

This part looks at the following questions:

- How can you get employees interested in training?
- How do you know if there is a communication problem?
- Do you know what your trainees think about the training?
- Who are your trainees?
- Is the language of training more difficult than language on the job?
- What if your trainees say 'Why am I learning this?'?
- How clear is your writing?

How can you get employees interested in training?

Some employees will have difficulties with speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy. They may not want to do training. They may be afraid or embarrassed that their low language and literacy skills will become known. They may think they will fail the tasks. They may think that they will lose their jobs if their problem is known.

How can you encourage all employees to do training?

- Advertise the training sessions in different ways - on notice boards, at meetings, in small groups, one-to-one, etc.
- Give lots of information about the course:

  what it is about

  what trainees have to do in it

  what trainees will get out of it.
- Use your bilingual staff who have done the training to explain and encourage others to do the course.
- Explain that training can lead to job security and promotion or can help them get another job.
- Use your union representative to explain how important training is.
- Take the time to build trainee confidence.

How do you know if there is a communication problem?

There are many signs that employees are having problems with speaking, understanding, reading and writing.

Watch and listen for the signs.

Have you heard employees give any of these reasons for not doing training or for not reading and writing?

- *I'm too busy to read it now. I'll read it later.*
- *I'm too old to learn.*
- *I've been doing this for years. I don't need any more training.*
- *I'm not interested in doing that course/job.*
- *I haven't got my glasses with me. What does it say?*
- *Can you fill it out for me? I've got a bad hand.*
- *Can I hand in the form later?*
- *I can remember what they say. I don't need to take notes.*
- *I forgot what she said. Ask someone else.*

Have you noticed an employee who:

- continually makes mistakes when following work instructions?
- mixes up messages or repeats the wrong information?
- doesn't want to go for promotion or learn a different job?
- lets someone else do the talking for them?

Have you noticed a trainee who often:

- looks disinterested?
- looks at his neighbour's papers?
- takes longer than the others to find a point on a page?
- asks you to repeat the question and still doesn't understand?

- asks a friend to repeat what you said or to translate?
- takes a long time to answer a question?
- looks away or down when you ask questions or ask for comments?
- rarely asks questions or asks for explanations?
- answers a question you didn't ask?
- asks a question or makes a comment that is out of context?

Do you know what your trainees think about the training?

Here are some comments from non-English speaking background trainees about their frustrations when they are doing training.

'Sometimes I can't catch what she says because she speaks too fast and I don't understand her accent. I can't ask her to say it again.'
Kitchen Attendant

'I feel so frustrated when I can't find the words I want.'
Housekeeping Floor Supervisor

'I try so hard to say the right words, the right grammar and not say the words that are difficult to pronounce, that I forget what I want to say. Then I quickly say something easy and not important.'
Restaurant Chef

'They are listening to my accent and mistakes. They are not listening to what I'm saying.'
Storeperson

'I'm much quieter when I have to speak English because I don't want to make mistakes and I think they won't understand me.'
Room Attendant

If only you knew me in my own language!
Waiter

Look at Case Study 5

Who are your trainees?

Trainees come from many different backgrounds and they have had many different experiences. These can have an effect on their training.

Some trainees may find training difficult. This may be because:

- they aren't interested in learning
- they haven't learnt for a long time
- they had bad experiences at school
- they changed schools a lot because the family moved around
- they have hearing and eyesight problems
- they were often ill and fell behind at school
- they have no self-confidence
- they have learning difficulties

Some trainees are from non-English speaking backgrounds. Some may find it difficult to do training in English. This may be because:

- they arrived in Australia many years ago when there were no English classes
- they worked long hours when they first came to Australia and had no time to learn English
- they have no confidence in speaking, reading or writing in English
- they had little school education or they had bad experiences at school and that makes learning difficult now
- they have different ideas about learning and training

Before you start training think about your trainees.

Answer these questions to help you choose language that your trainees will understand.

- Could the trainees have problems writing eg filling out forms, writing notes?
- Could the trainees have problems reading eg forms, messages?
- Could the trainees have problems understanding ?
- Could the trainees have problems asking questions?
- How long is it since the trainees have been in a work learning situation?
- Have the trainees done training in Australia before?

Is the language of training more difficult than language on the job?

'In the training she used words I didn't understand, but I understand all the words about my job.'

Housekeeping floor supervisor

Make sure that your language in the training sessions is not more difficult than the language on the job.

Think about the job. Think about what your trainees need to read and write. Think about what they need to listen to and speak about.

On the job:

- Who do they have to speak to?
- What do they have to speak about?
- Who do they have to listen to?
- What do they have to listen to?
- What do they have to read?
- What do they have to write?

Think about your training session. Think about what your trainees need to read, write, listen to and speak about in the training session.

In your training:

- Do they need to read diagrams, graphs, technical language, instructions, handouts or notes on the whiteboard?
- Do they have to write answers to questions and assessments or fill in forms?
- Do they need to listen to instructions, questions or videos?
- Do they have to speak in groups and pairs about ideas, opinions and experiences, and report back?

Look at these examples of making language easier to understand.

The room will be checked by the floor supervisor to ascertain if it has been cleaned to a satisfactory standard.	*means*	Your floor supervisor will check the room to see if you have done a good job.
It is mandatory that all kitchen attendants exercise extreme caution when using abrasive cleansers. It is required that hand covering be used.	*means*	Kitchen Attendants You must wear gloves when you use the strong detergents and cleansers.

Look at Case Study 6

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What if your trainees say 'Why am I learning this?'

'I don't think it is important to learn this. I don't need it for my work. I just want to do my job'.

Room Attendant

Think about these questions:

- Have you ever been in a situation where you didn't know why you had to do or learn something at work?
- How did you feel ?

You probably felt disinterested, puzzled and didn't see the connection with other parts of your job or training.

Think about these ideas:

It is important to tell trainees why they are learning something. This is important for all trainees but it is especially important for those who come from non-English speaking backgrounds because:

- it helps you get started and sets the scene
- it helps make the connection between training and jobs and the whole work process
- it helps trainees know what to expect
- trainees can understand what they have to learn
- trainees can understand what they will be assessed on

How clear is your writing?

'I don't look at the notice board any more because it takes too long to read the notices and I don't understand most of them.'

Waiter

Before you start writing, think about these questions:

- Why am I writing this?
- What am I writing about?
- Who am I writing for?
- How will it look?

After you finish writing:

- Give it to someone to read and check. For example, if you are writing to room attendants, give it to one or two room attendants.
- Ask them these questions:
  Why did I write this document?
  What are the important points?
  Are any parts unclear? Which parts? Why?
- Rewrite the parts that are difficult to understand.

How does it read?

'I have to get my daughter to read things for me. Sometimes she doesn't understand the words, it's difficult for her too.'

Canteen supervisor.

The right language helps to make workplace documents easier to understand. Here are some ideas to help you write better documents for your workplace.

- use personal language - you, I and we, because it speaks directly to the reader
- use short sentences
- use simple and clear language

- use questions and answers because this makes the document clear and simple
- use words that the reader knows
- explain acronyms eg VE means vacant empty room

How does it look?

The way you present the information on the page is just as important as what you write.

Here are some tips to make your workplace writing look better and to make it easier to read.

- **use clear short headings** - it makes the document easier to read
- **write short sentences** - they are easier to read and understand
- **write short paragraphs** - they are easier to read
- **use bold, a different type of print or a larger print size for headings** - this makes them stand out
- **use dots** - it helps highlight points
- **use big, clear print** - if it needs to be read from a distance
- **use a type of print that looks like this** - letters with little hooks on them are easier to read
- **leave lots of white space on the paper** - it helps the reader to find important information faster

- DON'T USE CAPITALS - THEY ARE HARDER TO READ
- **don't use small print** - you have to stand near to read it
- **don't use print like this** - it is harder to read if you are writing a lot of information
- **don't underline to highlight information** - it makes it harder to read
- **don't fill every bit of the page** - it makes it harder to find information

Look at Case Study 5

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Section 1

Part 2: While you are training

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Part 2: While you are training

This part looks at the following questions:

- Why link job skills training with training in communication and numeracy?
- How should you do on-the-job training?
- How can you give good instructions?
- How should you ask good questions?
- Do you speak too quickly?
- Does the trainee really understand?
- How can you get feedback?
- How good a listener are you?
- Whose accent is a problem?
- Should you use interpreters?
- How can you get more out of a video?
- Have you thought about training with a buddy?
- How good is your trainee's maths?

Why link job skills training with training in communication and numeracy skills?

Trainees learn communication and numeracy skills for their job more effectively if they learn them at the same time as they learn their job skills.

Link job skills training with training in communication and numeracy skills so that:

- trainees can understand more of their training
- employees with low speaking, reading, writing and numeracy skills can do training courses
- employees can do their job more effectively
- communication in the workplace can improve

In your training you can help trainees with communication difficulties by:

- thinking about the job and breaking it down into its smallest tasks
- writing down what speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy skills are needed for each task
- helping trainees learn the job skills and the communication and numeracy skills at the same time

Here is an example of what you might do:

Situation: A room attendant must be able to write a message to her housekeeping supervisor about damage in a room.

She needs to:

- understand the instructions about what to do if something is damaged
- recognise the form she has to fill out
- know the names of everything in the room
- write these words more or less correctly
- write what has happened or what needs fixing

You can:

- check that the trainee understands the instructions by getting her to repeat what you said or asking her What- When- Where- Who- questions about the instructions

  You now know that the trainee has understood your instructions and it also improves her listening and speaking skills.

- teach your trainee the names of everything in the room by:
  - getting a drawing of the room and labelling it.
  - going through the words with her so she can learn the pronunciation.
  - getting her to practise with another trainee, with a buddy or at home

  The trainee has now learnt new words and can understand and pronounce them. This makes communication much easier.

- show her the form she has to use
- give her a few examples of how to fill in the form and what she has to write
- give her examples of a few common problems and get her to practise filling out the form

  This improves the trainee's reading and writing skills. She can do her job better and it has improved communication in the workplace.

Look at Case Studies 1 and 6

How should you do on-the-job training?

'I can understand better when the trainer shows me what to do, explains it and I can practise straight away.'

Housekeeping trainee

Here is a good model for skills development in on-the-job training. It also links the development of speaking and listening skills with the learning of job skills.

TRAINER	TRAINEE
• demonstrates • says procedure	• watches and listens • demonstrates
• demonstrates again • says procedure again, explains procedure	• watches and listens
• demonstrates	• says procedure
• says procedure	• does task
• checks • gives feedback	• does task • says procedure
• watches trainee practise	• practises

adapted from Demonstration Method, Streets Ice Cream

Look at Section 1 Part 2 How can you give instructions?

Look at Case Studies 1, 4 and 5

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How can you give good instructions?

'It's difficult to follow my supervisor's instructions. She jumps all over the place.' She says, 'The curtains must be opened first' and then she says, 'Oh, before you do that you must turn on the air conditioning and don't forget to make sure you say 'housekeeping' again before going into the room.' I get mixed up about what order I have to do things in'.

Housekeeping trainee

- Give instructions in the right order, that is in exactly the same order that you want them done.
- Give only the important points.
- Give one point at a time. Stress key points.
- Start each instruction with an action word, if possible. For example:
  - **Lift up** the corner of the bed
  - **Fold** the sheet like this
  - **Tuck** it in
- Demonstrate regularly and clearly.
- Make sure the trainee sees what you are doing.
- Repeat the main points to make sure they understand and remember.
- Check often that the trainee understands.
  Ask them to do the task.
  Ask them to tell you what the task is, how and why it's done.
  Don't ask questions that need just a yes or no answer.
- Use language that is used in the workplace but check that the trainee understands it.
- Speak slowly.
- Be supportive and patient.

Look at Case Studies 1 and 4

Here is an example of good instructions.

Housekeeping: Servicing bedrooms.

Entering the room

1. Knock on the door and wait for an answer.
2. Enter the room and leave the door wide open.
3. Put your trolley outside the door.
4. Take the cleaning supplies into the bathroom.

Did you know that most people remember...

10% of what they **READ**

20% of what they **HEAR**

30% of what they **SEE**

50% of what they **HEAR** and **SEE**

70% of what they **HEAR, SEE** and **TALK ABOUT**

90% of what they **HEAR, SEE, TALK ABOUT** and **DO**

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How should you ask good questions?

If you ask a good question you will get a good answer. Think about these ideas:

- Give trainees time to answer questions. For non-English speaking trainees, it takes longer to understand thoughts and ideas in a second language.
- Make questions as short and clear as possible.
- Repeat the question or use different words to ask the same thing.
- Ask a question you know the trainees can answer. This builds confidence. Next time you can ask a more difficult one.
- Don't ask questions that need just a *'yes'* or *'no'* answer eg *'Do you understand?, Can you do this?'*
- If you ask *'Do you understand?'* or *'Can you do this?'* check by asking the trainees to show and tell you.
- Ask questions that start with when, what, why, where and how. You will get a fuller answer and you will know if the trainee has understood you.
- Get information by saying, *'Tell me about....'*
- Don't ask negative questions eg *Can't you do that? You can do that, can't you?*

  In some countries you can answer this kind of question with a *'yes'* answer. It can mean: *'Yes, I can do that'* or *'Yes you are right, I can't do that'.*

Do you speak too quickly?

'She speaks too fast. I can't catch what she says.'
Room attendant

Many trainees who have low speaking and listening skills say that their trainers speak too quickly. They can't keep up.

To help your trainees:

- SLOW DOWN.
- Tell them what you are going to talk about. If the trainees know what the topic is, it will be much easier to understand.
- Speak slowly, but not so slowly that it sounds unnatural.
- Speak clearly. Don't chop off the ends of words or run words into one another.
- Stop after each point. It makes it easier to understand and gives you time to see if your trainees understand you.
- Repeat each point or use different words. This gives the trainees a second chance to understand.
- If you are making a number of points, count them out on your fingers.

Look at Case Study 5

Does the trainee really understand?

'He says he understands when I ask him but I'm not really sure that he does. How can I be sure?'

Food and Beverage Manager

- In some cultures people say *'yes'* to show respect even if they have not understood.
- Sometimes *'yes'* may mean *'I hear you'* and not *'I understand you'*.
- Saying *'yes I understand'* may also be a way of saving face if the person has not understood and wants to bring the conversation to an end.
- Don't ask questions like *'You understand, don't you?'*, *'You've finished, haven't you?'*, *'You know what to do now, don't you?'*. These are not real questions. The person asking these questions expects a *'yes'* answer.
- Don't ask questions like *'That's not the way I showed you to do it, is it?'*. This kind of question is really confusing because to agree you have to say *'no'* and to disagree you have to say *'yes'*.
- Ask questions with *what, when, where, how and why*. These questions need an explanation and you will be able to check if the trainee has understood.
- Check understanding by asking the person to repeat the instruction or information.
- Check understanding by watching the person do the job.
- Get trainees to test their understanding by asking each other questions.
- Get trainees to train somebody else in the job. They need to know the language and the procedure to be able to do this.

Why aren't you getting feedback?

'The trainees never ask questions. They just stand there and listen. There's no expression on their faces... I have no idea what's going on in their heads.'

Housekeeping floor supervisor

If your trainees don't give you feedback it could be because:

- listening and speaking in a second or third language is a lot more difficult than in a first language
- the trainees may not have the language skills or confidence to ask questions or to ask you to explain something
- in some cultures it is not acceptable to ask questions and make comments in training, especially if they are negative
- they may worry that, if they need something to be explained further, it may give the impression that the trainer is not a good trainer
- interrupting in some cultures is not polite behaviour
- the trainees don't want to 'lose face' or look stupid if they want something explained
- in some countries trainees only listen and get handouts and they do not discuss, argue, ask questions or take lots of notes

To get feedback from your trainees try these strategies:

- Talk to the trainees about training in Australia. Tell them that most trainers usually want discussion, questions and comments.
- Repeat or simplify the information, instructions or questions.
- Give trainees a little more time to answer.
  It takes longer to process information in a second language.
  Many cultures believe an intelligent person waits and thinks and then answers the question.
- Ask a question that you know the trainees can answer. This helps to build confidence.
- Ask the trainees to repeat the instruction or information so that you can check that they understand. Be careful not to sound patronising.
- Do not ask questions that just need a *'yes'* or *'no'* answer eg *'Do you understand?'*.
- Ask questions that start with *when, what, why, where* and how and you will get a fuller answer.
- Don't ask negative questions eg *'Can't you do that?, 'You can do that, can't you?'*
  In some countries you can answer this kind of question with a 'yes' answer.
  It can mean: *'Yes, I can do that'* or *'Yes, you are right, I can't do that.'*
- Give trainees positive feedback. This increases their self-confidence and encourages them to give feedback.

How good a listener are you?

'Sometimes I can't understand a word he says.
Why doesn't he go and learn to speak clearer?'
Kitchen hand

One listener may understand something but another may not. You can improve your own understanding of your trainees by asking yourself these questions:

- How tolerant are you of people from other cultures? If you have had negative experiences or feel uncomfortable with members of a particular culture you may have difficulties understanding the accent.
- Are you in the superior position? If you are, you probably don't try as hard to understand as if you were in the inferior position.
- How interested are you in the conversation? If you are interested in the conversation you will probably understand more than if you are not interested.
- Have you had much experience working with people from other cultures?
  - If you are familiar with an accent you can understand it better.
  - The closer you feel or the more familiar you are with the culture the more acceptable the accent.
  - Tone of voice and word stress are different in other languages. If the tone and stress of another language are used in English, it can make understanding more difficult.
  - Some people who learned English in countries where English is the official language, for example India, Singapore, Sri Lanka, the Philippines may speak English very fluently with a strong accent.

Look at Case Study 3

Whose accent is the problem?

Is it the trainee's accent?

> *'Sometimes I have no idea what she's saying, her accent is so heavy. I don't want to embarrass her by asking her to repeat it three or four times.'*
>
> Housekeeping trainer

How you can understand the trainee's accent:

- Listen to the words they are saying, don't listen to how they are saying it, ie the accent or pronunciation.
- If you don't understand, say so and ask the trainee to repeat it. Usually you understand some parts. Say something like *'I understood the problem but I didn't get where it is'.*
- Use the situation to help you understand what they are saying.
- Repeat what they say to check that you have got it right.
- Be patient.
- Think about your attitude to the speaker's culture.
- Suggest pronunciation classes if the speaker is very difficult to understand.

Look at Case Study 3

Is it the trainer's accent?

> *'I don't understand sometimes. It's his Australian accent.'*
>
> Apprentice chef

Some people who don't speak English well say they don't understand a speaker because of their accent. Very often the real reason is that the person is speaking too quickly, the words are too difficult, the grammar is too difficult, the sentences are too long or there is too much slang and jargon.

How you can help trainees to understand you:

- Slow down.
- Speak clearly.
- Choose your words carefully.
- Don't use slang and jargon.
- Make your sentences short and clear.
- Open your mouth more when you speak.
- Watch your trainees to see if they are understanding you.
- Tell the trainees to stop you, if they don't understand.
- Ask work colleagues to give you feedback on how you sound when training.
- Tape yourself when you are training and listen critically.

If English is not your first language:

- Learn to pronounce words clearly. Find out what sounds you have problems with.
- If you are not sure how to pronounce a word, ask someone who knows the word so that you can get the stress in the right place and then practise, practise, practise.
- Don't apologise for your accent.
- Try to speak with people who speak English as their first language as much as possible.

Should you use interpreters?

'I sometimes get one of the girls to translate for me. It saves a lot of time but sometimes even after they hear it in their own language they still get it wrong.'

Housekeeping supervisor

Using an interpreter or translator from among the employees can be helpful but it can lead to problems.

Only use an interpreter or translator if absolutely necessary and remember:

- Two people from the same country may speak different languages.
- Two people may speak the same language, but have different dialects.
- Just because someone speaks two languages doesn't mean that he/she is a good interpreter or translator.
- Make sure the interpreter or translator is fluent in both languages.
- Make sure the translator or interpreter knows the area of work.
- You can't check that what the interpreter says or writes is correct.
- Some people may not be able to read their first language.
- Use an interpreter who is acceptable to you and the trainee.
- Interpreting and translating give the interpreter a lot of power.

Look at Case Study 2

How can you get more out of a video?

'They put on a video, but they spoke so quickly I didn't understand anything.'

Apprentice chef

Here are some ideas that you can use to help trainees from non-English speaking backgrounds to get the most out of a video.

- Explain what the video is about before you show it. This helps set the scene. It makes it easier for the trainees to follow the video.
- Tell the trainees what parts to look for. Prepare them for the important parts.
- Stop the video regularly and talk about what they have watched. Rewind it if necessary and watch it again. Write any important points on the board.
- Let the trainees take the video home so they can watch it as often as necessary.

Have you thought about training with a buddy?

A buddy is a work colleague who helps a new employee in their job. The buddy is there to explain how to do the job and to answer any questions about the job.

If you are using a buddy to help you in training:

- Be clear about what you want the buddy to do.
- Be clear about how long you want the buddy to work with the new trainee.
- Make sure the buddy knows what the responsibilities are.
- Make sure the trainee understands what the buddy's responsibilities are.
- Match the buddy and trainee. Make sure they feel comfortable with each other.

Using a buddy to help a new employee learn new skills has advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages:

- It saves the trainer time.
- Trainees may feel more comfortable because they can ask more questions and they don't feel so embarrassed if they make a mistake.
- They may have a common language.
- Most trainees like the special attention they get.

Disadvantages:

- They may train the wrong way and teach bad habits.
- Trainees with very low speaking, listening, reading or writing skills may need more time than the buddy can give.
- The buddy may not have enough time for their own work.

Look at Case Study 4

How good is your trainees' maths?

Some trainees have difficulty working with numbers. Trainees from non-English speaking backgrounds may also have problems with the language of maths.

How many words can you think of that mean subtract? Here are some: *minus, take away, subtract, discount, less, reduce, take off.*

Make sure your trainees understand the language of maths.

- If trainees have reading and writing problems in their own language they may have problems with maths as well.
- Check that they can add, subtract, divide and multiply if these are needed for their job.
- Check that your trainees can do the parts of the job where numbers are needed.
- Think about the maths that is used in your workplace.

  The following strategies will help you do this:
  - Check that trainees can read the job roster.
  - Check that trainees can read their pay slip.
  - Check that trainees can work out quantities of chemicals and how to dilute them.
  - Check that trainees can work out simple percentages eg 10% of a bill.
  - Check that trainees can work out the change for a bill.
  - Check that trainees can count the items on their trolley.
  - Check that trainees understand and can write large numbers correctly.
  - Check that trainees can say numbers in English.

Section 1

Part 3: When you are assessing

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Part 3: When you are assessing

This part looks at the following questions:

- What is ACCESS?
- How can you help trainees to use ACCESS?
- How can you get employees interested in assessment?
- How are you going to assess?

What is ACCESS?

'I have worked in restaurants for a long time, here and in my country, but I didn't do a course. ACCESS is good because I can get a piece of paper that says that I am good at my job.'

Waiter

ACCESS is the way employees in the hospitality industry can have their skills and work experience recognised.

Who can do ACCESS?

Employees can do ACCESS if they:

- have skills and experience in their job, either at their workplace or another workplace, overseas or in Australia.
  or
- have done a course that is not recognised by the industry.

Why do ACCESS?

- The employee will have a paper that says that they have all the skills for their job.
- It may help the employee get a better job.
- It will give the employee credit points if they do a TAFE or private college training course.
- The employee will know that they are doing their job to the industry standard.

How can trainees do ACCESS?

- Trainees can do ACCESS by using the *Keys to ACCESS* learning package which is a video and booklet. *Keys to ACCESS* has modules for different work areas and the trainer can work through the practical exercises with the trainee. When the trainee is ready for assessment, they can be assessed by an ACCESS assessor.
- Trainees can also do ACCESS through recognition of prior learning.

What do employees have to do in an ACCESS assessment?

ACCESS is not an exam!

In the assessment the employee has to show the workplace assessor (probably a supervisor or manager) that they can do their job to the industry standard.

Where can you find out more about ACCESS?

Ask your supervisor or manager or call the Tourism Training office in your state or territory or Tourism Training Australia.

How can you help trainees to use ACCESS?

'I heard about ACCESS but I don't really know what it is. They say I have to fill out all these forms and read and write in an exam. No, I don't want to do it.'

Kitchen hand

In many ACCESS assessments there is no reading and writing. ACCESS is really about doing a good job.

- It is important that employees from non-English speaking backgrounds:
  - have their qualifications, skills and experience recognised
  - use their skills in the workplace
  - are assessed fairly
- Make sure that **all** employees in your section know about ACCESS, what it means for them and what they have to do.
- Help employees to apply to do it.
- Help employees from non-English speaking backgrounds learn the language of the job as well as the skills.
- Give them time to practise until they feel ready to demonstrate their skills.
- Encourage employees from non-English speaking backgrounds to do ACCESS. This might encourage those with low language and literacy skills to do it as well.
- Encourage employees from non-English speaking backgrounds to become ACCESS assessors. This might also lead to more employees from non-English speaking backgrounds doing ACCESS.

Look at Case Study 2

How can you get employees interested in assessment?

Some employees will have difficulties with speaking in English or with reading, writing and numeracy. They may not be interested in doing ACCESS or other work related assessment. They may be afraid or embarrassed that their low language, literacy or numeracy will become known. They may think that they will fail the tasks and that they will lose their jobs.

Try these strategies:

- Give lots of information about the assessment. Tell employees:
  - what it is about
  - how you will do it
  - what they will get out of it
  - what they have to do in it
  - that they have time to practise
  - that they do the assessment when they are ready
  - that the results are confidential
- Use your bilingual staff who have done the assessment to explain and encourage others.
- Explain that assessment can lead to job security and promotion or help them get another job.
- Take the time to build their confidence.

How are you going to assess?

'How can I assess him? I don't think he knows all the words in the kitchen but he's a good worker. I want to help him get the piece of paper.'

Chef and ACCESS assessor

'Why do they ask me to tell them how to do the job? I can show them that I can do it.'

Kitchen steward

When you are assessing employees with language and literacy difficulties make sure the assessment is fair, that it takes place at the right time, and that they are ready for assessment.

Try these strategies:

- Tell the trainees why you are assessing them.
- Tell the trainees what you are going to assess and how you will do it.
- Help them prepare for the assessment. Check that they know the language of the job and the job tasks.
- If the trainees need certain language and literacy skills for the assessment task, make sure they have these skills.
- If a job doesn't need language or literacy skills, a demonstration of the job skills is enough.
- Don't assess language and literacy skills that are not necessary for the job.
- Make sure the trainees understand the questions. Different cultures use different body language: nodding can mean 'no' in some cultures. Ask them to repeat the question to make sure they understand.
- Repeat or ask the question using different words if necessary.
- Give the trainees time to answer the questions. It takes longer to think through a question and give an answer in a second language.

Look at Case Studies 2 and 6

Section 2
Case studies

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Introduction to the case studies

- **Case Study 1**

  Giving clear **instructions**
  Helping trainees to **understand new words**
  A possible cross-cultural issue: **motivation**

- **Case Study 2**

  Helping employees do **ACCESS Assessment**
  Cross-cultural issue: **speaking other languages at work**
  Using **translators and interpreters**

- **Case Study 3**

  Understanding **accents**
  Helping employees with **pronunciation difficulties**

- **Case Study 4**

  Using the **buddy system**
  Improving **on-the-job training**
  Helping **trainees understand the training**

- **Case Study 5**

  Making **training less threatening**
  Helping employees **understand training material**
  Helping employees to **write workplace documents**

- **Case Study 6**

  Making learning easier
  Why **some subjects are easier than others**
  Job language and **training language**
  Cross-cultural issue: **writing**
  Making **assessment** fair

Introduction to the case studies

These case studies are a resource for trainers, supervisors and managers. They are based on real workplace examples. The aim is to stimulate discussion and ideas on ways to make training and communication in the multi-cultural workplace more effective and more accessible.

Who can use the case studies?

- The case studies can be used in a train the trainer workshop, in supervisor training or in workplace communication training.
- The case studies and discussion questions can be used independently by trainers, supervisors and managers who wish to increase their own awareness and skills.
- The case studies can be used by a trainer who is confronted with a particular situation and wants some relevant strategies.
- The case studies can be used as a self-evaluation resource for trainers, supervisors or managers.

How can you use the case studies?

The case studies are designed to stimulate discussion and ideas. Each case study presents a training situation together with the reactions and attitudes of trainees and/or trainers. The material can be used by workshop participants or individuals in the following ways:

- To analyse difficulties that a trainee or trainer is having and to think about the consequences of these for the workplace.
- To examine their own responses to the situation and think about what they could do in a similar situation.
- To suggest strategies that could make training and communication more effective in particular situations.

In workshops:

The questions for each case study will assist the trainers to plan and conduct workshops. The trigger questions will help to raise awareness and to assist participants to develop knowledge and skills for training and communicating more effectively.

Some suggestions for responses and strategies are included to assist the trainer. The responses and strategies allow participants to work through real workplace issues and problems. In discussing strategies it is important that all suggestions are respected as valid as this will encourage participants to express their opinions and offer alternate solutions. There is no one right response or strategy.

No more than two case studies should be discussed in any one workshop.

Individually:

The questions for each case study aim to raise awareness and to assist the individual to develop knowledge and skills for training and communicating more effectively.

Some suggestions for responses and strategies are included. The responses and strategies allow the individual to work through real workplace issues and problems. There is no one right response or strategy.

Linking case studies to strategies.

In some of the case studies there are references to the training strategies in Section 1. This is to guide you to more detailed information about particular strategies.

The case studies are 'composite'. They are based on real workplace examples. They are from a range of employees, trainers and workplaces. To preserve confidentiality, names, ethnic backgrounds and jobs have been changed.

Case Study 1

Peter

Peter is the supervisor of the restaurant stores section of a large hotel. He is concerned about the work of one of his employees, Jimmy.

Peter is getting frustrated as he tries to explain and give instructions to Jimmy about his job. Peter gives instructions to Jimmy and then, as a check, asks Jimmy to repeat them. But Peter has difficulties understanding what Jimmy says. He doesn't want to ask him to say it again as he doesn't want to embarrass him.

Jimmy often makes mistakes in his job. Peter is not sure if it is because Jimmy hasn't understood the instructions correctly or if he has a reading problem.

Peter is also bothered by Jimmy's apparent lack of motivation and initiative. He has to be told to do everything, even the routine jobs. *'I tell him to tidy up and he does it, but when it's untidy again I have to tell him again.'*

Peter has almost given up, *'Sometimes there's too much time involved in explaining and getting him to do something. I end up doing it myself.'*

Jimmy

Jimmy has been in Australia for six years. He learnt English at school and university in his country and for a short time in Australia. His reading and writing are adequate for his job.

Jimmy says that Peter speaks too quickly and doesn't look at him when he speaks - this makes it difficult to understand.

Peter's instructions are not clear, step by step instructions and sometimes Jimmy has problems following them.

There are many new words Jimmy has to learn and sometimes different chefs give the one product different names. Sometimes there are words in French or Italian and they are especially difficult to understand, remember and pronounce. Although Jimmy can read the food and drink labels, he has problems pronouncing the words and understanding them when Peter or someone else says them. *'I say them my way and Peter says them another way and a bar person says them another way. I don't know what they want.'*

Discussion Questions

These questions are only a guide. They should be used as trigger questions to stimulate ideas and discussion. There are no 'right' answers to these questions.

1. What could Peter do to make his instructions clearer?
2. How would you help Jimmy learn the new words and pronounce them?
3. What would you do to help Jimmy understand the pronunciation of the new words?
4. Can you think why Jimmy appears to be unmotivated and lacking initiative?

Suggested Responses

1. To make the instructions clearer you could:
   - work out a training /instruction plan before you begin
   - list all the points you want to get across in the order that they have to be done
   - give the trainee the whole picture and show where his job fits in
   - slow down and speak clearly
   - look at the trainee when giving instructions as this helps understanding if he can see your face when you are speaking
   - watch the trainee do the job and help him if necessary
   - check that the trainee has understood by asking him to repeat the instructions or asking him questions using *what, when, why, how* and *where.*

   Don't ask *'Do you understand?'* Make sure you know that he understands. It makes it easier for you in the long run.

ⓘ Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'How can you give good instructions'

2. To help Jimmy learn the new words and pronounce them you could:
   - choose a few words every day or so
   - show Jimmy the products and tell him the names of them
   - get him to repeat the words
   - write them down for him and get him to write the words in his language
   - say the new words on an audio tape in the order that you have written them and ask him to practise reading them as well as pronouncing them
   - keep adding to the written list and tape
   - check regularly that he is learning the new words and that his pronunciation is improving but do this in an informal manner.

ⓘ Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'Why link job skills training with training in communication and numeracy?'

3. To help Jimmy understand the pronunciation of the new words you could:
   - use the an audio-tape recording so that Jimmy can learn how the new words are pronounced
   - record and write other words he is having problems understanding
   - get the people he works with to say the words so that he can get used to hearing how they pronounce them

- teach everyone how to pronounce the words correctly because this makes it easier for everyone to understand

4. It is possible that in Jimmy's culture an employee does only what he is told to do. Maybe initiative is not required or expected. The supervisor knows what has to be done and tells the workers. If this is the case Peter needs to tell Jimmy that it is different in their workplace and tell him what they expect him to do.

Case Study 2

Ketut

Ketut has been in Australia for one year. He studied English for two years at school in his country and is now going to English classes at night.

He says his English is poor so he applied for a job as a kitchen hand because he knew he wouldn't have to write or read very much. He has been working in the restaurant for nine months now and says he has no real problems understanding what is said. Sometimes it is too fast but *'If I don't understand, they say it again until I understand.'*

The Head Chef, Paul, has been training him to do his job and teaching him new work words. *He shows me, tells me and shows me again and then I do it. Sometimes he writes the word for me.*

Ketut wants to do ACCESS. He thinks it's good to have qualifications.

Ketut has friends working in the same hotel but not in the kitchen. He is happy not to work with his friends as he thinks that if everyone speaks their own language at work they won't be able to learn more English.

Paul

Paul, the Head Chef, says Ketut is a good and enthusiastic worker and catches on really quickly to new words and procedures, but there are still a lot of kitchen words he needs to know eg names of foods and implements.

Paul is an ACCESS assessor and would like to help Ketut do ACCESS. However Ketut would need to learn more words and read and write reasonably well to successfully complete ACCESS. Ketut says that his reading is all right but Paul is not too sure about this.

Discussion Questions

These questions are only a guide. They should be used as trigger questions to stimulate ideas and discussion. There are no 'right' answers to these questions.

1. What would you do to prepare Ketut to do ACCESS?
2. What do you have to consider when you are assessing someone with low language and literacy skills?
3. Do you think employees with the same language should work together or should they work in different sections? Why or why not?
4. How can you use employees who speak languages other than English to help you or other employees?
5. What are the advantages and disadvantages of getting someone to translate or interpret for you?

Suggested Strategies

1. Here are some strategies to help Ketut get ready to do ACCESS:

   Strategies for learning new words:

   - Show him the products, goods or implements and tell him the names of them.
   - Get him to repeat the words.
   - Write them down for him and get him to write them in his own language.
   - Put the words on tape in the order that you write them - this helps him to understand and learn the words as well as helping his reading.
   - Check, in an informal way, that he is learning the new words.

   Strategies for helping with reading and writing

   - Go through the *Keys to Access* video and workbook with him or get some other qualified person to help.
   - Help him with new words and with any writing. You could write down what he says or help him with the sentences and spelling, if he wants to write. As long as both of you can understand what he writes it doesn't matter if the spelling and grammar are not correct.

   Strategies for using video

   - Talk about each section of the *Keys to Access* video before he watches it. Make sure that he understands all the new words. This helps to set the scene and therefore makes it easier to follow.

In general:

- Make sure that he has plenty of time to practise the job skills and the language of the job. Tell him to let you know when he feels ready to be assessed.
- It is important to remember to assess only the language of the job.

ⓘ Look at Section 1, Part 3: 'How can you help trainees to use ACCESS?' and 'How are you going to assess?'

ⓘ Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'How can you get more out of a video?'

2. When you are assessing someone with low language and literacy skills:
   - Explain why you are assessing.
   - Explain what you are going to assess and how you will do it.
   - Don't assess language and literacy skills that are not necessary for the job.
   - If the trainee needs certain language and literacy skills for the assessment task, make sure they have these skills.

- Give the trainee time to answer the questions. It takes longer to think through a question and give an answer in a second language.
- Repeat or ask the question using different words if necessary.
- Make sure the trainees understand the questions. Different cultures use different body language - nodding can mean 'no' in some cultures. Ask the trainee to repeat the question to make sure they understand.
- Use different methods of assessment. Assessment might include demonstrating, explaining, writing, doing peer or self assessment, or doing small projects. Ask which methods the trainees would prefer. Use demonstration as much as possible. Remember you are assessing work skills not language and literacy skills.
- Trainees must be ready for assessment. Help them prepare for the assessment. Check that they know the language of the job and the job tasks. Practise with them and get them to self-check so that they know that they can do the job.

3. If people with the same language work together they can support each other by translating and explaining workplace instructions, documents etc. There is a feeling of togetherness which is good for morale.

4. Employees who speak languages other than English can help you to:
   - translate workplace documents eg handouts, memos, notices, instructions
   - interpret instructions for others
   - explain problems that others are having and vica versa
   - communicate with overseas guests and customers
   - bring ideas and solutions from their countries

5. Getting an employee to translate or interpret can have advantages and disadvantages.

   Advantages:
   - Gets information across more easily.
   - Saves time if correctly interpreted.

   Disadvantages:
   - Just because someone speaks two languages doesn't mean that they are a good interpreter or translator.
   - You can't be sure if the interpreter or translator is fluent in both languages.
   - You can't be sure if the translator or interpreter knows the area of work.
   - You can't check if what they say or write is correct.
   - Some people may not be able to read their first language.
   - Interpreting and translating give the interpreter a lot of power.

Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'Should you use interpreters?'

Case Study 3

Michael

Michael is the head chef in a hotel restaurant. Michael and most of the staff have problems with the accent of the sous chef, Vikram. He has a very strong accent and he *'needs to slow down'* when he speaks. Some of the staff have stopped trying to talk to Vikram because they can't understand him.

Michael has had quite a lot of experience working with staff with different accents and he usually understands Vikram better than the others. Vikram also tends to slow down when he's speaking to Michael. Consequently when the other kitchen or restaurant staff don't understand what Vikram says they go to Michael and ask him to find out.

Part of Vikram's job is to order supplies when Michael is on his day off. Sometimes the suppliers called Michael the next day to check that they got the order right. Michael has had to take this responsibility away from Vikram as it was causing too many problems with the suppliers and supplies.

'It's frustrating sometimes trying to work out what he says. Sometimes no matter how many times he says it, I just can't understand. It is also difficult for the apprentices when he is explaining something to them. I guess it must be frustrating for him as well.... I'd like to help him if I can.'

Vikram

Vikram has been in Australia for almost 5 years and is now working as a sous chef. He did his schooling and chef training in English in India. He worked as head chef in four and five star hotels and for catering companies in India. Since coming to Australia he has worked in a few hotels and in one he trained the apprentices. However when they got their qualifications Vikram was asked to leave.

He says he has no problems understanding Australians because he had an Australian teacher in India.

He was asked if any of the staff asked him to repeat what he said or misunderstood him. His reply was, *'No, not at all. They all understand me. I did all my education and my training in English.'*

Discussion Questions

These questions are only a guide. They should be used as trigger questions to stimulate ideas and discussion. There are no 'right' answers to these questions.

1. Are some accents easier for you to understand? Which ones? Why?
2. What role does the listener have in trying to understand someone with a strong accent?
3. Why do you think Vikram speaks more slowly when he speaks to Michael?
4. Michael wants to help Vikram. What would you suggest he do?
5. *'Accents themselves are not the only issue, but they become a convenient way to discriminate against people, to exclude people who do not fit in easily and to deny them opportunities for transfer or promotion.'*

   (Maximising Diversity, Australian Public Service Commission, AGPS Canberra, 1990)

   What is your opinion?

Suggested Responses

1. Here are some reasons why some accents are easier to understand than others:
   - Some people who learned English in countries where English is the official language, for example India, Singapore, Sri Lanka, speak English very fluently but with a strong accent.
   - Individuals who have had negative experiences or feel uncomfortable with members of a particular culture may have difficulties understanding the accent.
   - It is more difficult to understand an accent if you have had little experience with that accent. If you are familiar with an accent you can understand it better.
   - The closer you feel or the more familiar you are with the culture, then the more acceptable the accent is.
   - Tone of voice and word stress are different in other languages. If the tone and stress of another language is used in English, it can make understanding more difficult.

Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'Whose accent is the problem?'

2. It is important that the listener takes an active role:
   - Listen and show that you are interested.
   - Check your understanding by repeating what the person is saying in your own words.
   - Remember that your body language and facial expressions carry a message.
   - Think about your attitudes to the speaker's culture.

Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'How good a listener are you?'

3. Vikram may speak more slowly to Michael because:
   - It may be a form of respect for Michael.
   - It is possible that Vikram feels less tense and more accepted by Michael because he takes time to listen and understand what Vikram says.

4. Michael could help Vikram by:
   - Having a meeting with the staff and giving them strategies to help them understand Vikram better.
   - Telling Vikram that his colleagues and the suppliers have difficulties understanding him, the reasons for the difficulties and the effect they are having on the restaurant.

- Suggesting that he speak more slowly.
- Suggesting that he think about doing a pronunciation course. Give him information on where he can find a course.
- Affirming his work skills and value as a colleague.

Case Study 4

Liming

Liming came to Australia from China four years ago. She has been working as a room attendant in a five star hotel for about 3 years. She could speak very little English when she started her job at the hotel.

In the hotel orientation training Liming understood about 20%. She said it was *'too fast and too many new words.'* Luckily her friend, also from China and a room attendant, was able to explain everything to her later. Liming didn't think orientation training was important for her job because the guests never ask her anything about the hotel and they are not in the rooms most of the time.

After the on-the-job training Liming's friend explained much of what the trainer had told her, for example, the meaning of abbreviations on the trolley form: VD (vacant dirty), OC (occupied clean). She also told her the names of things in the rooms.

'I needed some towels but I didn't know the name, so I looked for the other Chinese girl and asked her and went downstairs and got them. I was too scared to use the phone to call the office. My trainer told me what to do but it was too fast. I didn't want to ask her to repeat it.'

If there is a problem in the room, such as a broken lamp, Liming has to write it down on a special form. Her trainer didn't explain how to fill it out. In the first few months she always had to find her friend to help her fill out the form or she told her supervisor. Sometimes she didn't do anything.

Discussion Questions

These questions are only a guide. They should be used as trigger questions to stimulate ideas and discussion. There are no 'right' answers to these questions.

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of a work colleague helping a new employee?

2. What could the trainer do to improve the on-the-job-training for housekeeping trainees with low language and literacy skills?

3. What are the possible results of training if the trainer doesn't think about the trainees' level of language and literacy?

Suggested Responses

1. Using a work colleague/buddy to help a new employee has advantages and disadvantages:

   Advantages:

   - Saves the trainer time.
   - Trainees may feel more comfortable learning with a colleague. They can ask more questions and they don't feel so embarrassed if they make a mistake.
   - They may have a common language other than English.

   Disadvantages:

   - They may train the wrong way and teach bad habits.

Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'Have you thought about working with a buddy?

2. To make the training more effective for employees with low language and literacy skills the trainer could:

   - Speak more slowly.
   - Take more time and explain the abbreviations more carefully and check to see if they are clear.
   - Check to see if the trainees know the names of the most important things in the rooms.
   - Hand out drawings of the rooms with the names of the furniture etc labelled.
   - Hand out drawings of parts of the room with the correct placement of ashtrays, paper etc.
   - Give the telephone instructions more clearly and step-by-step and write down the procedure.
   - Go through the form with the trainees and explain what is wanted and give a few examples.

Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'How can you give good instructions?' and 'How should you ask good questions?'

3. If the trainer doesn't think about the language and literacy needs of the trainees it could result in:

- Wasted time.
- Less efficiency.
- Misunderstandings.
- Mistakes.
- Accidents.
- Customer complaints.
- Employee stress.
- Lower standards.

Case Study 5

Susanna

Susanna is a trained infants teacher from the Philippines. She has been in Australia for eight years and works in a four star hotel as a Housekeeping floor supervisor.

Although she learnt English in the Philippines she didn't understand much in the hotel orientation training. The accent was different and everyone spoke so quickly. '*When the trainer asked a question, I put my head down and thought "Please don't ask me." I was dying.*' She was also frightened to ask or say anything in case no one understood her.

She couldn't understand the many documents that explained such things as the hotel rules and policies, but she had to sign them straight away agreeing to work under certain conditions. She took copies home so that her husband could read them for her, but he didn't have the time or the interest to help her.

Susanna's comment on her first day of on-the-job training: *'My supervisor asked me to make a bed. I didn't know how to make a bed. I had never made a bed before. Oh my God, I felt embarrassed.'* She went home and cried, *'Oh God, my job is cleaning rooms.'*

Susanna has been a floor supervisor for 2 years now. During the supervisor training she had a few problems, particularly with the reading. Although her English skills have improved, she lacks confidence in large groups. She enjoyed doing small group work in the supervisor training because she could give her opinion and the group leader would report back for the group.

Susanna is unsure of her writing so she gets her supervisor to check the written warnings to room attendants or any other important documents she has to write.

Discussion Questions

These questions are only a guide. They should be used as trigger questions to stimulate ideas and discussion. There are no 'right' answers to these questions.

1. What could the trainer do to make the training less threatening to employees with low English language and literacy skills?

2. What could the hotel do to make written material more accessible to employees with low reading skills?

3. What could Susanna do to improve her writing skills?

Suggested Responses

1. Training would be less threatening if the trainer could:
   - use a variety of training methods eg small groups, pairs
   - ask trainees easy questions at first
   - be supportive and patient
   - be more culturally sensitive
   - speak more slowly

Look at Section 1, Part 1: 'Do you know what your trainees think about the training'

and

Section 1, Part 2: 'Do you speak too quickly?'

2. The following strategies would make documents more accessible:
   - The hotel could write the documents in plain English.
   - The hotel could translate the documents into the most common languages in the hotel.
   - The trainer could go through the documents in the training session and explain in simple terms what they mean.
   - The employees should be given time to read the documents before they sign them. The employees should be able to take them home so they can use a dictionary or have someone translate for them.

Look at Section 1, Part 1: 'How clear is your writing?'

3. There are many ways Susanna could improve her writing:
   - She could ask her supervisor to write an example of a warning letter to use as a model.
   - She could look at similar documents and use them as a model.
   - She could attend English in the Workplace language and literacy classes held in the hotel.
   - She could attend a TAFE or community college class to improve her writing skills.

Case Study 6

Kes

Kes is a full-time student studying in the hospitality sector of the industry. She studied English at school and university in her country, Thailand.

Although Kes has excellent English skills, she has problems with English in her course. She said she lost three kilos in the first semester because of the stress of studying in English for the first time: *'Sometimes I feel very down and I think that I can't continue with the course.'*

The teachers talk very quickly and it's difficult for her to 'catch' some words. There are a lot of new words that are specific to the industry or there are types of food she is not familiar with. *'If I don't understand I try to ask a question, but sometimes I'm not quick enough and it's too late to ask. I need more time to get the question or answer out.'* Kes says about some classes, *'I'm too scared to ask - maybe they think I'm stupid.'* She usually asks her friends to explain after class.

Kes and most of her friends from non-English speaking backgrounds spend a lot of time studying Accountancy because they find it is the hardest subject. They think Food and Beverage is the easiest.

Writing is frustrating for Kes. She can't express herself as well in English as she can in Thai. She spends a lot of time trying to get the grammar and spelling right when she is writing her assignments. Her marks are not as good as she thinks they should be and she doesn't understand why because she reads all the texts and quotes directly from them.

Kes and some of her classmates from non-English speaking backgrounds think that the tests they have to do every week are not fair to them. Kes said, *'Australians don't have to worry about the language just the technical words - they have an advantage over us.'* She rarely finishes the tests in time and therefore doesn't get good marks. She thinks this is very unfair because she knows the content of the subject.

Discussion Questions

These questions are only a guide. They should be used as trigger questions to stimulate ideas and discussion. There are no 'right' answers to these questions.

1. What could teachers or trainers do to help trainees from non-English speaking backgrounds understand more of the content of the lessons?

2. Why do many of the students think Accountancy is the most difficult subject and that Food and Beverage is the easiest?

3. How important are correct grammar and spelling when writing assignments? Does it depend on what the trainee is writing and on the subject? Is it important in Food and Beverage? Is it important in Business Communication? Is it important in Housekeeping? How about Accountancy? Why or why not?

4. What could be the problem with Kes's written assignments?

5. How could the tests be made fairer for students from non-English speaking backgrounds?

Suggested Responses

1. To help trainees from non-English speaking backgrounds understand more of the content of the lessons the trainers could:
   - slow down
   - give handouts before the class so the students can prepare for the class by becoming familiar with the new language
   - prepare pictures or descriptions of foods, implements etc that are likely to be unfamiliar eg different kinds of fish, vegetables and sauces
   - review the subject matter at the end of the lesson and ask questions to check for understanding
   - review the subject matter again at the beginning of the next lesson

   Look at Section 1, Part 2: 'Do you speak too quickly?'

2. Many students have problems with Accountancy because the language is very abstract.

   Food and Beverage is easier to understand because the language is more concrete: you can see and touch the objects the language refers to and you can do something with the objects.

   The more abstract the language the more difficult it is to understand.

3. It is important to remember that the language of the training should not be more difficult than the language of the job. You are training and assessing the trainees' skills to do the job not write or talk about the job.

   Look at Section 1, Part 1: 'Is the language of training more difficult than language on the job?'

4. Kes may copy directly from course books. Different cultures have different ways of writing assignments. In many Asian countries it is expected that students copy relevant sections directly from reference texts. This shows that the student has read the texts.

   The trainer should tell the students that this is not acceptable in Australia and explain and give examples of what is required.

5. The tests could be made 'fairer' by giving the students with lower reading and writing skills more time.

   The students could have more practice doing similar tests so they could increase their speed.

   Look at Section 1, Part 3: 'How are you going to assess?'

Appendix

Where to get more information

- Workplace skills training
- Courses for language, literacy and numeracy
- Bookshops for language, literacy and numeracy books
- Books, videos and CD Roms

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Workplace skills training

To find out more information on skills training and assessment contact:

- the Human Resources Department in your workplace
- the relevant training body in your state

The following addresses may be helpful:

Tourism Training Australia
National Office
PO Box Q309, QVB Post Office
Sydney NSW 2010
Ph: (02) 290 1055
Fax: (02) 290 1001

Tourism Training NSW
102 Buckingham Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph: (02) 310 1233
Fax: (02) 310 1241

Tourism Training Victoria
7th Fl, 189 Flinders Lane
Melbourne VIC 3000
Ph: (03) 9654 5864
Fax: (03) 9650 5761

Tourism - Hospitality Training SA
Office 13, 12 O'Connell Street
North Adelaide SA 5006
Ph: (08) 239 0693
Fax: (08) 239 0683

Hospitality and Tourism IETC WA
GPO Box X2261
Perth WA 6001
Ph: (09) 220 1786
Fax: (09) 220 1813

Tourism Training Tasmania
Hospitality House
176 New Town Road
New Town TAS 7008
Ph: (002) 782 699
Fax: (002) 782 261

Tourism Training ACT and Region
GPO Box 2092
Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: (06) 241 6777
Fax: (06) 241 4392

Tourism Training NT
PO Box 359
Darwin NT 0800
Ph: (089) 411 355
Fax: (089) 411 917

Tourism Training QLD
PO Box 98, Brisbane
Roma St QLD 4000
Ph: (07) 236 1990
Fax: (07) 236 1810

Courses for language, literacy and numeracy

- Language, literacy and numeracy classes are provided in workplaces by the **AMES English in the Workplace Program** and the **TAFE Workplace Education Program**.

To find out information on these courses contact:

- Adult Migrant English (Education) Service (AMES) in your state or territory and the AMES English in the Workplace Program. The Head Office addresses are provided below:

NSW AMES
84-86 Mary Street
Surry Hills 2010
Ph: (02) 289 9222
Fax: (02) 289 9995

AMES VICTORIA
Myer House
250 Elizabeth Street
MELBOURNE 3000
Ph: (03) 9633 2781
Fax: (03) 9663 1130

AMES SOUTH AUSTRALIA
The Renaissance Centre
5th Floor
127 Rundle Mall
ADELAIDE 5000
Ph: (08) 224 0922
Fax: (08) 232 1826

AMES TASMANIA
175 Collins Street
HOBART
Ph: (002) 337 119
Fax: (002) 313 049

AMES QUEENSLAND
1st Floor
Phoenix House
333 Adelaide Street
BRISBANE 4000
Ph: (07) 221 5238
Fax: (07) 229 7534

AMES NORTHERN TERRITORY
2nd Floor
Casuarina Plaza
CASUARINA 0810
Ph: (089) 278 344
Fax: (089) 450 206

AMES WESTERN AUSTRALIA
4th Floor
12 St George's Terrace
PERTH 6000
Ph: (09) 220 1600
Fax: (09) 325 6075

- The TAFE College in your local area.

Other providers of language, literacy and numeracy include:

- Community Colleges
- Private providers

Check your local telephone directory.

Bookshops for language, literacy and numeracy books

NSW

Bridge Bookshop
10 Grafton Street
CHIPPENDALE NSW 2008
Tel: (02) 211 1660
Fax: (02) 211 1868

Language Book Centre
131 York Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 267 1397
Fax: (02) 264 8993

Dymocks
424 George Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 235 0155
Fax: (02) 221 5117

Tertiary and Technical Books
831 George Street
Railway Square NSW 2000
Tel: (02) 211 0561
Fax: (02) 281 5698

QUEENSLAND

Language People
245 Boundary Street
WEST END Qld 4101
Tel: (07) 844 8700
Fax: (07) 846 4168

VICTORIA

TESL Books
397 Little Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE Vic 3000
Tel: (03) 9670 3532
Fax: (03) 9670 3449

Bookery
348 Drummond Street
CARLTON Vic 3053
Tel: (03) 9347 7857
Fax: (03) 9347 7498

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Europa
238 Rundle Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Tel: (08) 223 2289
Fax: (08) 223 5704

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Language Centre
555 Beaufort Street
MOUNT LAWLEY WA 6050
Tel: (09) 328 8965
Fax: (09) 328 6161

Books, videos and CD Roms

The following materials may be useful for employees who want to improve their:

- language, literacy and numeracy skills
- skills in writing in plain English
- cross-cultural communication skills

Language and literacy and numeracy:

In Tempo: an English pronunciation course

Halina Zadwadski
NCELTR, Macquarie University, 1994

In Tempo is a complete, self-paced English pronunciation course which concentrates on the rhythm and stress of Australian English. It is particularly suitable for learners from Asian language backgrounds. The book comes with two ninety-minute audiotapes. It can be used alone by the learner and is suitable for intermediate to advanced level learners.

Writing for the Workplace

Barbara Barnard, Liz Wilson and Jenny Kerr
NSW AMES, Sydney, 1994

This is a series of five books and cassettes designed to meet the needs of workers with intermediate levels of reading and low levels of writing. The books and cassettes cover the following topics:

- introduction to forms
- leave forms, claim forms and job application forms
- notes and messages
- accident reports
- writing skills

Numeracy on the Line: Language Based Numeracy Activities for Adults

Beth Marr, Chris Anderson and Dave Tout
National Automotive Industry Training Board, Melbourne, 1994

This book has been designed mainly for workplace trainers to meet the needs

of trainees in the vehicle manufacturing industry. However most of the activities apply to workers in other industries as well. There are eight sections including work on calculators, decimals, percentages, charts and graphs and averages.

Skillshift

Applied Multimedia NSW AMES, BHP, Pacific Power, 1992

Available from: Applied Multimedia
PO Box 365 North Ryde
NSW 2113
Tel (02) 887 3988, (03) 9699 5166 and (09) 388 3223
and (06) 295 9533

Skillshift is a CD-ROM based multimedia program which develops workplace literacy skills in an interactive way. It is designed for workers with very low literacy skills.

It has five modules, each of which is on a separate CD-ROM disk. Each module has between 8 and 12 short lessons and learners work at their own speed to complete the exercises. The five modules are on:

- safety signs
- procedures
- notices
- forms
- charts and diagrams

English At Work

Fran Byrnes and Chris Candlin
National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research (NCELTR), Macquarie University, Sydney, 1991

This is a series of 64 video episodes, each of which highlights a problem or issue relating to working in the Australian context. They focus on misunderstandings and communications breakdowns. It is designed to help workers of non-English speaking backgrounds communicate in English, learn how to learn in English and to use English more effectively to live and work in Australia in the '90s. There are accompanying workbooks. It was originally screened on SBS TV.

Plain English

Working Words: a User's Guide to Written Communication at Work

Jan Kindler
Adult, Community and Further Education Board, Victoria, 1994

The book is a resource for people who write workplace documents. It is a guide to making written material easier to write, understand and use. It includes both good and bad examples of workplace memos, notices, operating procedures and training manuals. It explains how and why they do and don't work well.

Cross cultural issues

Working It Out

Giselle Mawer and Marilyn Wise
Seven Dimensions, Victoria, 1986

This 18-minute video comes with an accompanying booklet. It looks at a number of issues which often come up in muticultural workplaces - safety issues, work instructions, offending workers from other cultures and communicating informally. It analyses typical communication breakdowns, shows why they happen and then gives tips on how to avoid them.

Accents are Everywhere

Australian Public Commission
Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1992

This video has been produced to raise the awareness of managers and supervisors to issues related to accents in the workplace. It raises the issues of: different accents, accents triggering assumptions, communication as a two-way process, valuing diversity in the workplace.